KIDS WERE SPECIAL TO CLARA LEE

Clara Chilson Lee went the extra mile for Augustana students.

She not only coached debaters, but also drove them to the competition.

She once took her power of persuasion to the Viking football team's locker room and delivered an inspirational pre-game talk.

She had no children of her own, but through Viking Varieties, debate, and her classes, she became a foster mom to hundreds of "kids."

Clara Chilson Lee, who taught at Augustana for 31 years, died November 17, 1996. She was 79.

Brad Heegel '76, director of public events at Augustana, was one of Clara's students.

"When I reflect upon my years as a student at Augie, Clara Lee seems to be at the center of nearly every thought," says Heegel. "In her many roles - as teacher, advisor, mentor, 'parent,' and friend, she always, always, wanted the best for, and insisted on the best from, 'her kids.' I was proud - and always will be - of being one of her kids.'"

A native of Webster, S.D., Clara Chilson was born on May 23, 1917. She was graduated from Augustana in 1939 ,and received a master's degree in public speaking from Northwestern University in 1944.

She taught English and speech at South Dakota and Nebraska high schools, and taught speech at Northwestern University while a graduate student there. She was instructor of speech and drama at Pacific Lutheran University, where she also served as head of the speech department.

Clara joined the Augustana faculty in 1952. She taught in the speech, drama, and communications department and served as the department chair from 1970 to 1983.

Clara was at ease with kids.

"She was probably a role model for many faculty and students at the college," says Harold "Doc" Krueger. "She was a marvelous teacher and had extremely high standards."

Clara served as faculty adviser to Viking Varieties, and was the faculty manager of KAUR, Augustana's FM radio station. She was the director of forensics for 13 years. In 1969 she coached the Augustana team that appeared on the College Bowl sponsored by General Electric. In 1958 she was chosen Debate Coach of the Year by a national speech honorary society.

During her 31 years at Augustana Clara was the featured speaker at more than 150 high school commencements. She also served as a forensics judge.